

SEDAR Steering Committee
Meeting via Conference Call
February 8, 2010
9:30 – 11:30 am

CALL CONTACT INFORMATION:
DIAL: 877-774-6707
PIN: 201

1. Schedule changes for 2010

(Attachment 1 – SEDAR Work plan, and Attachment 2 – SEDAR Planning Schedule)

The following minor revisions were requested and agreed to by the participating cooperators and are provided to keep the Committee informed.

- 1) South Atlantic red snapper update requested for completion by December 2010.
- 2) Spiny Lobster requested for completion by December 2010
- 3) FL FWC agrees to produce a benchmark assessment of Goliath Grouper in 2010, to be reviewed in November 2010 (jointly with Spiny Lobster).
NOTE: It is recommended by Staff of SEDAR and FL FWC that these reviews be held jointly, with a subset of each of the Gulf and South Atlantic SSC's in attendance. This will require coordination among the two councils and consideration of the types of recommendations that may be handled through sub-groups of an SSC.
- 4) Additional Gulf tilefish stocks considered for SEDAR 22 – overall complex and blue line

ACTION: Asked to endorse changes supported by the Councils.

The next items have been raised but not resolved at the Council level and should be considered by the Steering Committee. These items are not time critical and could be settled in May.

- 1) When to add South Atlantic tilefish, bumped in 2010 for red snapper?
- 2) Additional Gulf updates for 2011 (2 scheduled now)
- 3) Is a benchmark assessment for Gulf Red Snapper needed in 2014, or will the update in 2013 suffice?
- 4) Should the planned SA red snapper update be changed to a benchmark, and if so, can it be completed by December 2010 as desired?

ACTION: Options for consideration:

1. Consider schedule changes at this meeting
2. Discuss options for further discussion and resolution in May
3. Add additional changes for further discussion in May

2. Progress and comments on procedure changes beginning in 2010

(Attachment 3 – May 2009 Steering Committee Meeting Summary)

The Steering Committee agreed to substantial procedural changes in May 2009 that begin to impact assessments conducted in 2010. The Committee should have some general discussion of the changes now that the Councils have had opportunity to consider their impacts on operations and to receive comment from members and constituents. Updated SEDAR guidelines incorporating these changes will be reviewed and considered for approval at the May meeting. In the meantime, some minor issues related to the changes are offered for consideration and resolution by the committee.

- 1) CIE Role in Updates. The Committee is asked to consider adding a CIE reviewer to all reviews of updates, or to add CIE participation in updates on an as needed basis.

SUGGESTION: Add a CIE reviewer for the SA red snapper update to be conducted in November 2010.

- 2) AWs and CIE. CIE representatives were added to the AW panels several years ago. While the feedback is helpful, the CIE representatives must only fill a reviewer role which reduces their ability to provide suggestions and improve the assessments during the workshop. In addition, CIE report completion is not under SEDAR control and is not proving compatible with the SEDAR process. Specifically, CIE reports do not become available until the assessment report is completed and available for review, so it is difficult to address CIE reviewer comments. Future use of CIE reviewers in AWs is seemingly more problematic as future AWs will move into a webinar process, which will create time zone issues for many of the CIE appointees

SUGGESTION: Rely on CIE input during the pre-review.

- 3) REVIEWS. Procedural changes call for SEDAR reviews to be held in conjunction with SSC meetings. This means that the SEDAR schedule will impact SSC and Council activities to some extent. Administrative details related to such joint operations are unresolved and, upon further reflection, pose some challenges that the Committee must address.

Discussion at the meeting in May 2009 directed that the Review Panel and SSC should work together in reviewing the assessment, with all SSC members attending and 1-2 members serving as actual reviewers for the assessment. The review panel will remain responsible for completing a report documenting the review and reviewers comments. The general charge to the review panel, and relation to the SSC, is described in the May 2009 meeting summary as follows:

The panel will be asked to accept or reject the assessment, recommend reference point values, and provide determinations of stock status. As with the current process, the review panel will be given leeway to adopt a baseline from among the sensitivity analyses if they believe there is a more appropriate run than the one chosen by the assessment panel. The panel will work with the SSC to develop a written list of any additional sensitivity analyses or projection scenarios. Such additional analyses will be documented in a report to the SSC that will become an appendix to the SEDAR assessment report. The panel report will be completed within 2 weeks of the conclusion of the review.

Several questions arise as efforts begin to put this plan into practice, beginning with the SEDAR 22 review scheduled for January 2011.

i. Meeting arrangements provided through SEDAR or the Council

SEDAR staff expectation is that the Council will make the necessary arrangements and provide administrative support, as the review is considered a part of an SSC meeting

ii. Budget and Travel obligations

SEDAR staff expectation is that the Council will cover travel expenses for SSC members, Council members, and Council staff. SEDAR will cover travel for SEDAR staff, Council appointed reviewers, and additional members of the analytical team as needed.

iii. Composition of the review panel, chair, and role of SSC

- The Review Panel will consist of 2 CIE reviewers (currently 3), a council appointed reviewer (no change), and several SSC reviewers (additions).
- The entire SSC will attend the review as observers.
- One to two SSC members will be appointed by the Council to the review panel as panel participants (eg reviewers), including contributing to the review report and representing the SSC.
- The SSC chair or another designee of the Council will serve as chair of the review meeting, and will be responsible for compiling and editing the review panel report as is now completed by the review panel chair. This is a change from the current practice, in which the SEFSC director appoints the review panel chair.
- The actual review meeting will be shorter than the current practice, likely only lasting 3 days for a typical review of 2 benchmark assessments. This will be immediately followed, at the Councils discretion, by a 1-2 day meeting of the SSC during which the SSC will finalize its recommendations regarding the assessment, in particular those items assigned specifically to the SSC such as fishing level recommendations. Both groups will then have 2 weeks to complete the text of their reports.
 - May consider allowing 4 days for the review and 1 day for SSC recommendations, and still complete the meeting within a normal work week.
- Care needs to be taken to ensure that these modifications do not contradict the expanded peer review guidelines in revised National Standard 2.

iv. Review Reports

- Under current practices, the review panel chair edits the review panel report. This will fall to the SSC or other Council-designated chair.
 - Concern: This is an additional task, that may potentially fall to the SSC chair, and may therefore created a conflict with the Chair's efforts to complete the SSC report due on the same schedule.
 - Alternative: Allow the SSC vice-chair to chair the review component and complete the review panel report
- The expectation is that once the review is completed, the SSC, by virtue of having been present through the full review deliberations, will not need to

further discuss and debate the assessment findings and can instead immediately move into making fishing level recommendations.

- Both reports, the review report addressing the assessment and the SSC report addressing fishing level recommendations, will be available to the Council within 2-3 weeks. This significantly reduces the time between finalization of the assessment and its presentation to the Council.
- Each CIE appointed reviewer will also complete a CIE reviewer report providing their independent findings of the assessment. These reports may take as much as 6 weeks to undergo internal CIE review, and, under current practices, at times are not available when SSCs consider assessments.
 - Alternative: Ask that each CIE appointed reviewer state at the conclusion of the review whether or not they support the assessment. This could be provided as a general statement from each reviewer that is developed during the review and documented in the review report. So far the CIE reviewer opinions are clear and their individual reports have held no surprises, but this would ensure no surprises occur in the future. Considering something along these lines will require consultation with CIE staff.

ACTION:

- Resolve CIE role in new process
- clarify roles and responsibilities for future review workshops
- Identify issues requiring further discussion in May

3. Conflicts of interest

The MSRA and associated revised guidelines may add some additional conflict of interest policies and procedures that will potentially affect SEDAR. At this time it is likely that the NS guidelines will adopt the policies of the OMB peer review bulletin which includes screening of reviewers for conflict of interest. It may be necessary for reviewers, other than the CIE appointees, to complete a conflict of interest form and to identify the appropriate body that will conduct the screening.

ACTION: Consider whether conflict of interest screening is required, and if so, provide guidance on the screening process. Consider addressing the screening process in detail in May.

4. Procedural Workshops Update

- i. Uncertainty workshop will be held February 22-26
- ii. Approval secured to carry-over funds from 2009 into 2010 to also support other planned procedural workshops
 - Historic Catches – Opportunity to conduct in 2010, likely mid-summer workshop

Challenges

- Overall assessment workload in 2010
 - Accelerated SA red snapper and Spiny Lobster completion dates
 - Ability of data managers to meet current assignments
 - Finding a suitable date between July and December
 - Natural mortality – remains on hold, pending outcomes from National workshop
- iii. Additional topics for 2011 workshops to be discussed in May.
Suggestions from the committee?

ACTION: Consider timing and objectives of a Historic Catch procedures workshop.

5.Budget Update

(Attachment 4, SEDAR activities budget)

A draft SEDAR budget for CY 2010 is provided for review and consideration. This budget accommodates expected level funding for 2010. Committee members are asked to review participation estimates in particular, and are advised that Councils are free to appoint additional participants to workshops if they are willing to absorb the travel expenses. The column labeled “# parts” represents non-federal, council appointed workshop panelists exclusive of Council staff, Council member, and SSC representative categories which are addressed in dedicated entries.